

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SR-02 ORM-01 IO-10 EB-07 AID-05

FDRE-00 SY-05 /091 W

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O O 011304Z APR 75 ZFF 4

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9063

AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE

USDAO SAIGON

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 05167

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AMER PINT VS GW

SUBJECT: EVACUATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: (A) SAIGON 3865; (B) BONN 5141

BEGIN SUMMARY: WEST GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS REQUESTED URGENT CLARIFICATION OF SECURITY SITUATION BEFORE COMMITTING GERMAN MERCHANT VESSELS TO EVACUATION OPERATION. IT SEEMS LIKELY THE SHIPS CAN BE USED ONLY IF US SECURITY DETACHMENT IS PLACED ABOARD. REQUEST URGENT INFORMATION FROM EMBASSY SAIGON FOR RESPONDING TO FRG REQUEST. END SUMMARY.

1. ACTING POLITICAL DIRECTOR RUHFUS ASKED EMBOFFS TO COME TO FONMIN THIS MORNING (APRIL 1) TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE  
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EVACUATION ASSISTANCE IN LIGHT OF INFORMATION FROM REF

(A) WHICH WE HAD PASSED TO MINISTRY LATE LAST NIGHT. RUHFUS POINTED OUT THAT, AS STRESSED IN QUESTIONS TRANSMITTED REF (B), SECURITY IS KEY TO GERMAN DECISION. SHIP OWNERS HAVE MADE ACTUAL USE OF VESSELS DEPENDENT ON SATISFACTORY ASSURANCES ON SECURITY AND ARE ASKING FRG TO GUARANTEE FULL INDEMNIFICATION FOR VESSELS AND CREWS. EMBASSY SAIGON'S REPLY THAT "SECURITY NOT A PROBLEM" PROVIDES INSUFFICIENT BASIS FOR DECISION.

2. GERMAN CONCERNS ARE HEIGHTENED BY REPORTS FROM FRG EMBASSY SAIGON OF CHAOTIC CONDITIONS IN NHA TRANG HARBOR, INCLUDING SHOOTINGS BY ARMED SOLDIERS AND SOME DEATHS. (IN ADDITION, NEWS TICKERS REPORTED JUST BEFORE FONMIN MEETING THAT NHA TRANG HAS NOW FALLEN.) UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, FRG EMBASSY SAIGON HAS EXPRESSED MISGIVINGS AGAINST USE OF GERMAN SHIPS ON SECURITY GROUNDS.

3. POLCOUNS TOLD RUHFUS EMBASSY WOULD SEEK TO CLARIFY SECURITY SITUATION BUT MEANWHILE MADE PLEA FOR FRG TO KEEP SHIPS IN AREA, AS THEY MIGHT BE NEEDED FURTHER DOWN THE COAST EVEN IF NHA TRANG EVACUATION NO LONGER FEASIBLE. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, RUHFUS SAID MS RHEINLAND, WHICH IS NOW STANDING OFF CAM RANH, IS HEAVILY LOADED AND HE UNCERTAIN HOW LONG IT CAN WAIT IN VIETNAMESE WATERS; HE THOUGHT HE COULD GUARANTEE A TWO OR THREE DAY DELAY. MS VOGTLAND, WHICH STILL EXPECTED ARRIVE APRIL 3, WILL BE EMPTY AND PROBABLY COULD STAY INDEFINITELY FOR POSSIBLE EVACUATION ASSISTANCE.

4. FROM ENSUING DISCUSSION IT EMERGED THAT, AS PRACTICAL MATTER, ONLY US AGREEMENT TO EMBARK AN AMERICAN SECURITY DETACHMENT TO KEEP ORDER ON BOARD WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO MEET CONCERNS OF GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND SHIPOWNERS. POLCOUNS EXPRESSED UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHETHER SUCH US RESOURCES AVAILABLE BUT UNDERTOOK TO ASK. BOTH WE AND FRG APPRECIATE EMERGENCY CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH EMBASSY SAIGON OPERATING, BUT WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL, IF WE ARE TO GAIN GERMAN ASSISTANCE, THAT WE PROVIDE FULLEST POSSIBLE INFORMATION.

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5. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE URGENT RESPONSE FROM EMBASSY SAIGON ON SECURITY SITUATION, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY THE AVAILABILITY OF US SECURITY PERSONNEL FOR EVACUATION VOYAGES, AS WELL AS INDICATION AS TO LIKELY CONTINUING NEED FOR GERMAN ASSISTANCE. SUGGEST INFORMATION BE CABLED TO US AND ALSO BE PROVIDED FRG EMBASSY SAIGON.  
HILLENBRAND

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INSTRUCTIONS, EMERGENCY EVACUATION, SHIPS, EMERGENCY PLANNING  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 01 APR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975BONN05167  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750112-0383  
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**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 115  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 SAIGON 3865, 75 BONN 5141  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 15 MAY 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <15 MAY 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <19 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** EVACUATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES  
**TAGS:** AEMR, PINT, VS, GE  
**To:** SAIGON  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006